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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Meats for the Summer Menu

An interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman and Miss Lucy M. Alexander, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Tuesday, July 26, 1932.

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MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody:

The topic on the Household Calendar today is Meats for the Summer Menu. Miss Lucy Alexander, the meat cooking specialist of the Bureau of Home Economics, is at the other microphone across the table. You've heard Miss Alexander talk about meat cookery many times before, and many of you have copies in your kitchen libraries of her leaflets on cooking beef, lamb, and pork. So I'm not going to lose any time. I'm going to begin right away asking her the questions I know you'd like to hear answered.

Miss Alexander, what are the points you think of first in choosing meat dishes for these hot days of mid summer?

MISS ALEXANDER: Well, for hot weather menus, I say first of all choose meat dishes that have the maximum of flavor for the minimum of effort in the kitchen. And this summer especially, most of us are looking for bargains in meats, as well as in everything else we have to buy. But with all the cured meats as well as all the fresh cuts to choose from, there really is plenty of variety at low cost.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, I understand Miss Alexander, that even despite the recent upturn in the price of pork products, ham and bacon and all pork cuts both fresh and cured are still away below former price levels. And the forequarter cuts of beef and lamb are retailing lower than in 10 years.

MISS ALEXANDER: I'm glad you mentioned ham, Miss Van Deman. To my way of thinking, it's one of the very best summer meats, and for the family of 4 or 5 a whole ham is a very economical buy. Of course, if you want to boil the whole ham and slice it cold, that's all right. But I prefer to serve it in a variety of ways -- some hot and some cold. When I buy a whole ham in the summer, I ask the butcher to cut out three or four very thin slices from the center. These slices, about a quarter of an inch or so thick, I cut into strips, fry, and serve with vegetables for dinner. Or if we are going on a picnic in the car, I take this fried ham along, in a covered dish to keep it warm. A strip of this warm ham with a leaf of crisp lettuce in a buttered roll makes one of the tastiest picnic sandwiches I know.

Also I have the butcher cut out a thick slice of ham for baking with tomatoes or sweet potatoes in the casserole. Then the rest of the ham I boil, slice cold what I can, and grind the rest for sandwiches, salads, stuffed peppers, and other combinations. A platter full of scrambled or poached eggs takes on a different look and a different taste with a generous sprinkling of ground cooked ham over the top.

(over)

MISS VAN DEMAN: And while you're talking about left-overs of cooked ham, don't forget that new French toasted sandwich you and Mrs. Yeatman made the other day.

MISS ALEXANDER: Oh yes, the one with a filling of ground cooked ham mixed with enough ham fat or butter to make it easy to spread. We made up sandwiches with this filling and it wasn't necessary to butter the bread. Then we dipped them quickly into a mixture of 2 eggs beaten up in a cup of milk, and browned the sandwiches slowly in fat in a skillet, just as you do French toast. We served the sandwiches hot with some amber-colored watermelon pickle and everybody voted them mighty good.

Now, let me put in a word about bacon in summer menus. A few slices of crisp, delicately browned bacon on a serving of quick-cooked cabbage or summer squash, or swiss chard makes a very appetizing, satisfying combination. And be sure to save all your bacon drippings, keep them cold, and use them while fresh in frying and seasoning other foods.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Now what about beef, Miss Alexander? Any particularly seasonable suggestions there?

MISS ALEXANDER: Yes, I think so. We prepared some pressed corned beef the other day that was very appetizing. We used corn beef plate costing 10 cents a pound in the retail market. First we simmered it for about 4 hours. When the meat was tender, we stripped out the gristle and part of the fat, and put the pieces of meat lengthwise in a deep baking pan. We poured on just a little of the meat liquor, and then put another pan on top and weighted it down. We left the meat overnight in the coldest part of the refrigerator, and when we turned it out next day it sliced down perfectly with a sharp knife.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, I remember those attractive slices of cold pressed corn beef. And I haven't forgotten either the curry of lamb made with the lowest priced cut and served on a platter with a border of flaky boiled rice. Was that easy to make?

MISS ALEXANDER: Yes, I just ground up the cooked lamb. Then I browned 2 sliced onions in a little fat, and added a quart of partly ripe sliced tomatoes and let them cook slowly until tender. Then I stirred in the cooked lamb and a little gravy, and added curry powder and salt to taste. That was all there was to it. Sometimes I use tart green apples instead of the tomatoes. This is an excellent way to use up left-overs of cooked lamb or veal, or fresh pork and the curry flavor is most appetizing in hot weather.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Certainly the popularity of curried dishes in oriental countries bears that out.

Thank you, Miss Alexander, for all those good suggestions.

Now next week we'll try to catch up on the summer fruit and vegetable market with the aid of Mr. Wells A. Sherman of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Goodbye for this time,